SOME NEW BOOKS.

John Fiske's Latest Essays.

Some twenty essays and lectures, written during the later years of the author's life, are collected in the two volumes entitled *Essays Historical and Literary*, by JOHN FISKE (Macmillans). Of these papers a few deal with scientific or philosophical questions, to wit, those entitled, "Evolution and the Present Age," "John Tyndall" and "Herbert Spencer's Service to Religion," with which may be grouped the "Reminiscences of Huxley." One essay, that on "John Milton," is purely literary, and another is a discussion of folk-lore, which has for its text the Russian legend of "Marya Morevna," in which figures Koshchei, the Deathless. It is the thirteen historical essays that constitute the bulk of the two volumes, and it is to some of these that we shall here invite attention, beginning with the discussion of "Old and New Ways of Treating History." We should point out that much of this historical material was intended to be incorporated in a comprehensive "History of the American People," which, unfortunately for his countrymen, the author did not live to complete, although his many and large contributions to our knowledge of the subject are of imperishable value.

I.

Although the paper on "Old and New Ways of Treating History" is, ostensibly, only a sketch, it may be fairly described as exhaustive. There is no point of view from which the subject is not carefully considered. After reminding us how materially the traditional conceptions of Edward I. and Henry VIII. have been modified by modern research, and how completely the legend of William Tell has been exploded, Mr. Fiske explains how the mistaken notions, once accepted as authentic, arose. He points out that the old-fashioned historian was usually satisfied with copying his predecessors, and thus an error once started became perpetuated. The modern historian, on the other hand, "must go to the original sources of information, to the statutes, the diplomatic correspondence, the reports and general orders of commanding officers, the records of debates in councils and Parliaments, ships' log books, political pamphlets, printed sermons, contemporary memoirs, private diaries and letters, newspapers, broadsides and placards, even, perhaps, to worm-eaten account books and files of receipts. The historian has not found the true path until he has learned to ransack such records of the past with the same untiring zeal that animates a detective officer in seeking the hidden evidences of crime." Never must the modern historical writer rest content with the statements of earlier historians, except where the evidence behind such statements is no longer accessible.

Not only is there in our time an increased facility of access to national archives, and almost everywhere an abatement of the jealousy with which such records used to be withheld from public inspection, but with the progress of the arts various new ways have been found of bringing original materials within the reach of the ordinary student. By means of photography parchments can be reproduced with the strictest accuracy. An American scholar, for instance, Arthur Middleton Reeves, has provided investigators of our pre-Columbian history with photographic facsimiles of the three Icelandic manuscripts which tell of the Norse discovery of America. Another example is the work of another American, Benjamin Stevens, who undertook to reproduce by photography a hundred volumes of diplomatic correspondence relating to the American Revolution. Such applications of photography relieve the student in many cases from the necessity of making a prolonged and costly literary pilgrimage.

Mr. Fiske goes on to note that the increasing disposition to insist upon knowledge at first hand, which distinguishes the new from the old way of treating history, is but one phase of the scientific and realistic spirit of the age in which we live. "There is nothing to show that he highly-trained minds of the present day are wider in grasp or deeper in penetration than those of many past ages, but in some respects they are more mature than those of any past age, and one chief symptom of this maturity is the strict deference paid to facts. This deference marks the historic spirit, as it marks the scientific spirit." No longer, for instance, would we tolerate the speeches invented by ancient historians and put in the mouths of their protagonists. Neither would we brook the euphuistic editing of private correspondence. Touching the latter point, we are reminded that "half a century ago the letters of George Washington were edited by the late President Sparks of Harvard, who felt himself called upon to amend them. Where the writer said 'Old Put,' the editor would change it to 'General Putnam,' and where Washington exclaims that 'things are in a devil of a state,' he is made to observe that 'our affairs have reached a deplorable condition.' This sort of editing belongs to the *old* ways of treating history. The spirit of the new ways was long ago expressed by honest Oliver Cromwell when he said to the artist: 'Take me as I am—mole and all!'"

Still another contrast between old and new ways of treating history is brought out. No longer is a historian permitted to disclose predilection or prejudice. "History must not harbor prejudices, because the spirit proper for history is the spirit proper for science. The two are identical. The word 'history' is a Greek word originally meaning 'inquiry.' Aristotle named one of his great works 'a history concerning animals,' whence from Pliny downward and in modern usage we often hear of 'natural history.' It is the business of the historian to inquire into the past experience of the human race, in order to arrive at general views that are correct, in which case they will furnish lessons useful for the future. It is a task of exceeding delicacy, and the dispassionate spirit of science is needed for its successful performance. Science does not love or hate its subjects of investigation; the historian must exercise like self-control." An illustration is given of the fact that, so long as a historian allows his views to be colored by fondness for one people as such, and dislike for another people as such, his conclusions are sure to be warped, and, to some extent, weakened. "The late Mr. Freeman was a historian of vast knowledge, wide sympathies and unusual breadth of view, but he was afflicted by two inveterate prejudices—one against Frenchmen, the other against the House of Austria, and the damage thereby caused is flagrant in some parts of his field of work, and traceable in many more." Mr. Fiske also regards as too narrow Freeman's well-known definition, "History is past politics, and politics are present history." John Richard Green's "History of the English People" is cited as embodying a wider and more just conception of the scope of historical narrative.

One of the most interesting features of the essay on historical methods is the reference to the attempts made in the first sixty years of the nineteenth century "to treat history as if it were a physical science, and to trace the destinies of nations to peculiarities in climate and soil, ignoring moral causes. There was also an inclination to underrate the work of great men, and ascribe all results to vaguely conceived general tendencies. Against these views there came a spasmodic reaction, which asserted that history is nothing but the biographies of great men. The former view is most conspicuously represented by Buckle, the latter by Carlyle and Froude. Concerning the point at issue between them it may be said that, since general tendencies are manifested only in the thoughts and actions of men, it is these that the historian must study, and that, as casual agencies, a Cromwell or a Luther may count for more than a million ordinary men; but, after all, our ultimate source of enlightenment still lies in the study of the general conditions under which the activity of our Cromwell or Luther was brought forth."

Our author finds another important difference between the old and the new methods of historical writing in the propensity exhibited by the old-fashioned student of history to confine his attention to the so-called classical period in the evolution of a given race or nation, such as the age of Pericles, or of Augustus, or of Elizabeth, or of Louis XIV. Such a habit is pronounced fatal to the acquirement of anything like a true perspective in history. "What should we say of the botanist who should confine himself to Jacqueminot roses and neglect what gardeners call weeds? How far would the ornithologist ever get who should only study nightingales and birds of pardise? In truth, the dull ages which no Homer has sung or Tacitus described have sometimes been critical ages for human progress." An exclusive devotion to literary or so-called classical periods leads us to misjudge certain communities as well as certain ages. Our perspective thus gets warped in space as well as in time. "Few persons realize the great importance of the Roman Empire of the East, all the way from Justinian to the iniquitous capture of Constantinople by the French and Venetians in 1204. In these ages Constantinople was the chief centre of culture; through her commercial relations with Genoa she exercised a civilizing influence over the whole of western Europe, and she was the military bulwark of Christendom, first against Saracen, then against Turk, until, at last, she succumbed in an evil hour, which we have not yet ceased to mourn." The grievous underrating of the so-called Byzantine Empire is attributed partly to its lack of a period of classical literature, though partly, also, of course, to the ill-feeling of western Europe toward the Greek Church.

In our author's opinion, however, the worst distortion of perspective in our study of the career of mankind is one of which we have only lately begun to rid ourselves. What he has in mind is the distortion caused by supercilious neglect of the lower races. We have been accustomed loosely to apply the name savages to a vast number of groups of men in widely different stages of culture, but all alike falling far short of the European level. It is only recently that the manners and customs, the ideas and institutions, of savage and barbarous peoples have been subjected to serious study, comparison and analysis. In our author's opinion, this has wrought a greater change in our conception of human history than all other causes put together. "Something like a new Renaissance was begun when Englishmen in India began to study Sanskrit, and were struck with its resemblance to the languages of Europe. The first result of such studies was the beginning of comparative philology in the establishment of the Aryan family of languages; pretty soon there followed the comparative study of myths and folk-tales; and then came comparative jurisprudence, which, for the world of English readers, is chiefly associated with the beautiful writings of Sir Henry Maine. Next it began to appear that many problems which remain insoluble so long as we confine our attention to the Aryan world soon yield up their secrets if we extend our comparison so as to include the speech, the beliefs and the customs of savages." It is now proved beyond a doubt that the institutions of civilized society are descended from institutions like those that we may at the present time observe in savage societies. "Savages and barbarians are simply races that have remained in phases of culture which more civilized races have outgrown, and hence one helps to explain the other. Certain obscure local institutions, for example, in ancient Greece and Rome have been made quite intelligible by the study of similar institutions among American Indians. In these ways history, without ceasing to be a study of individuals and nations, has come to be in the broadest sense, the study of the growth and decay of institutions."

II.

We have seen how much importance is assigned by Mr. Fiske to public documents, and, we may add, to private memoirs and correspondence. Among historical materials of the latter kind he mentions as of exceptional value the Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson, the last Royal Governor of Massachusetts, which were published in London some fifteen years ago by one of his great-grandsons. Our author has found it impossible to study this book without having his conception of the beginnings of the American Revolution modified, in some points slightly, in other profoundly. The initial essay in the first of the volumes now before us is devoted to this subject. The paper is prefaced with the assertion that, among the American loyalists of the Revolutionary period, though they represented principles that have been irredeemably and forever discredited, "were men of noblest character and purest patriotism; and we need only to divest ourselves for the moment of the knowledge of subsequent events which in their day none could foresee; we need only to put ourselves back in imagination into the circumstances amid which their opinions were formed and their actions determined, in order to do justice to the deep humanity that was in them. We may dissent from their opinions, and disapprove their actions as heartily as ever; but it is our duty, as students of history, to take our stand upon that firm ground where, freed from the fleeting passions of a day, true manliness may be taken for its worth." Mr. Fiske goes on to say that, among the American loyalists of the Revolutionary period, there is, perhaps, none who has had such hard measure as Thomas Hutchinson. To couple his name, as it has been coupled, with that of Benedict Arnold, is pronounced gross injustice to the last Royal Governor of Massachusetts. The conclusion borne in upon our author by a study of his recently published "Diary and Letters" is that, "alike for intellectual eminence and for spotless purity of character, there have been few Americans more thoroughly entitled to our respect than Thomas Hutchinson. It is sad, indeed, though perfectly natural, that such a man should have had to wait a hundred years before his countrymen could come to consider his career dispassionately and see him in the light in which he would himself have been willing to be seen."

After reviewing his career in the light of the newly acquired materials, Mr. Fiske does not shrink from asserting that, for intellectual gifts and accomplishments, Hutchinson stands, not only far above all the other Colonial Governors, but in the foremost rank among American public men of whatever age. "For thorough grasp of finance he was the peer of Hamilton and Gallatin. In 1809, John Adams, who loved him not, said 'he understood the subject of coin and commerce better than any man I ever knew in this country.' His mastery of law was equally remarkable, and, as a historian, his accuracy is of the highest order. His personal magnetism was so great that, in spite of all vicissitudes of popular feeling, so long as he remained upon the scene and until after his departure for England had been followed by the outbreak of war, he did not fully lose his hold upon the people. He was nothing if not public spirited, and his kindness toward persons in distress and sorrow knew no bounds." On the other hand, he seems to have been deficient in intellectual sympathy with plain, common people. "He was too thoroughly an aristocrat to enter into their ways of thinking; and therein was one source of his weakness as a statesman. But the chief source of that weakness, as is so often the case, was closely related to one of his most remarkable features of strength. That inborn legal quality of his mind, which, without the customary technical training, made him a jurist capable of winning the admiration of Lord Mansfield, was too strongly developed. Allied with his rigid Puritan conscience, it outweighed other good qualities and warped his nature. He was enveloped in a crust of intense legality through which he could not break. If he had lived a century later, he might have written the memorable pamphlet in which another great Massachusetts jurist, Benjamin Curtis argued that President Lincoln had no Constitutional authority for emancipating the slaves." Mr. Fiske adds that "it is always well that such strides in advance should be made under careful protest, for only thus is society kept secure against crude experiments. But the men best fitted to utter the protest are not likely to be competent leaders in revolutionary times, when it becomes necessary to view many facts in a new light."

III.

One of the most valuable papers in these volumes is the estimate of "Connecticut's Influence on the Federal Constitution." Mr. Fiske finds the germ of our Federal organic law in the Constitution creating the Commonwealth of Connecticut, which was framed and adopted by a convention that met at Hartford on Jan. 14 1639. This instrument, named "The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut," differed materially from the plan of government then and for some time afterward operative in Massachusetts Bay, for it placed no ecclesiastical restrictions upon the suffrage, but gave it to all admitted freemen who had taken the oath of fidelity to the Commonwealth. Lest there should be any doubt as to who were to be regarded as admitted freemen, the General Court of Connecticut later declared that the phrase meant all who had been admitted by a town. Thus it appears that in Connecticut the towns were the original sources of power, just as in our Federal Republic the original sources of power are the States. It was perfectly well understood that each town was absolutely self-governing in all that related to its own local affairs, and that all powers not expressly conferred upon the General Court by the Fundamental Orders remained with the town. One express direction to the towns foreshadowed the provision in our Federal Constitution that it shall guarantee to each State a republican form of government. It like manner the Fundamental Orders provide that each town shall choose a number of its inhabitants, not exceeding seven, to administer its affairs from year to year. With regard to the General Court, it was ordered that each town should send four deputies to represent it, until the number of towns should so increase that this rule would make an assembly inconveniently large, in which case the number for each town might be reduced. Under all circumstances, the towns were to be equally represented, without regard to their population. It is this feature that gives a distinctly federal character to this remarkable constitution. With regard to the Governor, he was to be chosen at a popular election without any preliminary nomination. An election was to be held each year, in the spring, at which every freeman was entitled to hand to the proper official a paper containing the name of the person whom he desired for Governor. The papers were then counted, and the name which was found on the greatest number of ballots was declared elected. Here, then, was an example of popular election by a simple plurality vote.

Mr. Fiske points out that this was the first instance known to history in which a commonwealth was created in such a way. The compact drawn up and signed by the Pilgrims in the cabin of the Mayflower is not a constitution, because it does not lay down the lines upon which a government is to be constructed. It is simply a promise to be good and to obey the laws. On the other hand, the "Fundamental Orders of Connecticut" summon into existence a State Government which is, with strict limitations, paramount over the local governments of the three towns, its creators. Our author's comment on this remarkable instrument runs as follows: "It was the first written constitution known to history that created a government. Secondly, it makes no allusion to any sovereign beyond the seas, nor to any source of authority whatever, except the three towns themselves. Thirdly, it created a State which was really a tiny federal republic, and it recognized the principle of federal equality by equality of representation among the towns, while, at the same time, it recognized popular sovereignty by electing its Governor and its upper House by a plurality vote. Fourthly, let me repeat, it conferred upon the General Court only such powers as were expressly granted. In these peculiarities we may see how largely it served as a precedent for the Constitution of the United States." In a footnote we are reminded that our colonial charters, while in a sense constitutions, were always, in form at least, a grant of privileges from an overlord to a vassal, something given or bartered by a superior to an inferior. "With the constitution which created Connecticut it was quite otherwise. You may read its eleven articles from beginning to end and not learn from it that there was ever such a country as England or such a personage as the British Sovereign. It is purely a contract in accordance with which we, the people of these three river towns, propose to conduct our public affairs. Here is the form of government which commends itself to our judgment, and we hereby agree to obey it, while we reserve the right to amend it. Unlike the Declaration of Independence, this document contains no theoretical phrases about liberty and equality, and it is all the more impressive for their absence. It does not deem it necessary to insist upon political freedom and upon equality before the law, but it takes them for granted and proceeds at once to business. Surely this was the true birth of American democracy, and the Connecticut Valley was its birthplace."

Passing to the part which Connecticut played in the formation of the Federal Constitution under which we live, Mr. Fiske recalls the strong opposition to such a Constitution which was disclosed in the Philadelphia Convention on the part of most of the States. The jealousy between large and small States was at that time more bitter than it is now possible for us to realize. War seemed not unlikely between New York and New Hampshire, and it was actually imminent between New York and her two neighbors, Connecticut and New Jersey. The first question, therefore, which had to be settled before any further work could be done had to do with the way in which power was to be shared between the States and the General Government. It had been agreed that there should be two houses in the Federal Legislature, and Virginia, whose statesmen were taking the lead in the constructive work of the moment, insisted that both houses should represent population. To this the large States assented, while the small States, led by New Jersey, would have nothing of the sort, but insisted that representation in both houses of the Federal Legislature should be only by States. It is obvious that such an arrangement would have left things very much as they were under the old Confederation. It would have left Congress a mere diplomatic body representing a league of sovereign States. As Mr. Fiske says, if such a state of things were to be the outcome of the Philadelphia Convention it might as well not have met.

The bitterness and fierceness of the controversy was extreme. Gunning Bedford of Delaware intimated that sooner than submit to be ruined by the proposed distribution of power the small States might have recourse to foreign Powers who would take them by the hand. "The convention was on the verge of breaking up, and the members were thinking of going home, their minds clouded and their hearts rent at the imminency of civil strife, when a compromise was suggested by Oliver Ellsworth of Windsor, Roger Sherman of New Haven, and William Samuel Johnson of Stratford—three immortal names. These men represented Connecticut, the State which for a hundred and fifty years had been familiar with the harmonious cooperation of the Federal and National principles. In the election of her Governor, Connecticut was a little nation; in the composition of her Assembly, she was a little confederation. However the case may stand under the altered conditions of the present time, Connecticut had in those days no reason to be dissatisfied with the working of her government. Her delegates suggested that the same two-fold principle should be applied on a continental scale in the new Constitution: let the national principle prevail in the House of Representatives and the federal principle in the Senate." Mr. Fiske goes on to remind us that, although the happy thought was greeted with approval by Franklin, the delegates obstinately wrangled over it, until, when the question of equality of the suffrage in the Senate was put to vote, the compromise went to the verge of defeat. The result was a tie. Had the vote of Georgia been given in the negative it would have defeated the compromise; but this catastrophy was prevented by Abraham Baldwin, a native of Guilford, Conn., and at one time a tutor in Yale College, who had recently emigrated to Georgia. Baldwin averted the defeat of the compromise, and the consequent breaking up of the Convention, by voting for equality of suffrage, contrary to his colleague, whereby the vote of Georgia was divided and lost. "Thus it was that at one of the most critical moments of our country's existence the sons of Connecticut played a decisive part and made it possible for the framework of our National Government to be completed. When we consider this noble climax and the memorable beginnings which led up to it, when we also reflect upon the mighty part which Federalism is unquestionably destined to play in the future, we shall be convinced that there is no State in our Union whose history will better repay careful study than Connecticut. Surely, few incidents are better worth turning over and over and surveying from all possible points of view than the framing of a little confederation of river towns at Hartford in January, 1639."

IV.

In the essay on "Alexander Hamilton" will be found a searching and discriminating exposition of the actual and prospective significance of the assumption of State debts to the amount of $20,000,000 by the Federal Government. This is recognized as a great victory for Hamilton, for the Federalist party and for the United States as a nation. "It certainly required a pretty liberal interpretation of the Constitution to justify Congress in assuming these debts, but, if it had not been done, it is very doubtful if the Union could have long been held together. We must always be grateful to Hamilton for his daring and sagacious policy, yet, at the same time, we must acknowledge that the opposition was animated by a sound and wholesome feeling. Every day showed more clearly that Hamilton's aim was to insure the stability of the Government through a firm alliance with capitalists, and the fear was natural that such a policy, if not held in check, might end in transforming the Government into a plutocracy—that is to say, a government in which political power is monopolized by rich men, and employed in furthering their selfish interests without regard to the general welfare of the people. Those who expressed such a fear were more prescient than their Federalist adversaries believed them to be, for now, after the lapse of a hundred years, the gravest danger that threatens us is precisely such a plutocracy. It has been one of our national misfortunes that for three-quarters of a century the mere maintenance of the Union seemed to call for theories which, when put into operation, are very far from making a government that is in the fullest sense of the people, by the people, and for the people." Mr. Fiske adds that the only party that ever extricated itself from the dilemma and stood at one and the same time unflinchingly for the Union and against paternal government in every form was the party of Jackson and Van Buren between 1830 and 1845.

When Hamilton was killed in his duel with Burr he was only in his eight and fortieth year. Could he have attained such a great age as John Adams he might have witnessed the Mexican War and the Wilmot Proviso. What his political course would have been had he lived longer is a matter of conjecture. To our author it seems clear that he would soon have parted company with the Federalists. "He had already taken the initial step in breaking with them by approving Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana. The narrow sectional policy of Pickering and the New England Federalists was already distasteful to him. As the Republican party became more and more national he would have found himself inclining toward it, as John Adams did, and, perhaps, might even have come, like Adams in later years, to recognize the merits and virtues of the great man whose name had once seemed to him to typify anarchy and misrule—Thomas Jefferson. Such mellowing influence does wide and long experience of life sometimes have, when one can witness great changes in the situation of affairs, that we may be sure it would not have been without its effect upon Alexander Hamilton. When the new division of parties came, after 1825, there can hardly be a doubt that he would have found his place by the side of Webster and John Quincy Adams."

V.

Admirable as are all the historical papers in these volumes, it is probable that most readers will assign pre-eminence to the essay on "Thomas Jefferson, the Conservative Reformer." A reformer Jefferson was throughout the whole of his adult life, up to his accession to the Presidency. Then he showed himself a conservative. Mr. Fiske shows how indispensable to the stability of the Federal Government was the reassurance given by Jefferson's well-known sympathy with the feelings and ideas of plain, common people, and how, at the same time, his own political views were modified by the vast responsibilities inseparable from the office of Chief Magistrate. "A man of such sympathetic insight into the popular mind—a faculty in which Hamilton was almost as lacking as Hutchinson—was just the man that was needed at the head of our Government in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Jefferson was needed at the helm in 8 0 as much as Hamilton was needed in 1790. He never could have done the work of Hamilton or of Madison. They were men of rare constructive genius; he was not. But, when the first work of construction had been done, and the Government fairly set to work, Jefferson was just the man to carry it along quietly and smoothly, until its success passed into a tradition, and was thus assured. If he had been the French iconoclast that the Federalists supposed him to be he could not have achieved any such results. But his career in the Presidency shows him, not as a Danton, but as a Walpole. Instead of the general overturning which the Federalists had dreaded the Administration quietly followed the lines which Hamilton had laid down. In other words, it was in the hands of a constitutional magistrate, who acquiesced in the decision of such questions by the will of the people. Moreover, as now wielding the administration and feeling the practical merits of Hamilton's measures Jefferson was no longer so ready to condemn them. In the most important act of his Presidency he deserted his strict constructionist theories and ventured upon an exercise of power as bold as Hamilton's assumption of State debts." The reference is, of course, to the purchase of the Louisiana territory.

To Jefferson's strong faith in the teachableness of the great mass of people, and to the influence which he consequently exerted in favor of equal political rights, should be largely attributed the triumph of universal suffrage, which, so far as adult white males were concerned, had been consummated in almost all of the United States by the close of the third decade of the nineteenth century. Should we condemn him or bless him for the powerful impetus given by him to the movement? Mr. Fiske answers: "We often hear people say that the experiment of universal suffrage is a failure, that it simply results in the sway of demagogues, who marshal at the polls their hordes of bribed or petted followers. This is no doubt very bad. It is a serious danger, against which we must provide. But do these objectors ever stop to think how much worse it would be if the demagogue, instead of marshalling his creatures at the polls, were able to stand up and inflame their passions with the cry that in this country they have no vote, no share in making the laws, that they are kept out of their just dues by an upper class of rich men who can make the laws? If your hod carrier was sulking for the want of a vote he would be ten times more dangerous than any so-called friend of labor can now make him. As it is, his vote does not teach him much, because of his dull mind and narrow experience, but, after all, it gives him the feeling that he is of some account in the world, that his individuality is to some extent respected; and this is unquestionably one of the most powerful and conservative safeguards of American civilization. In point of fact, our political freedom and our social welfare are to-day in infinitely greater peril from Pennsylvania's ironmasters and the owners of silver mines in Nevada than from all the ignorant foreigners that have flocked to us from Europe. Our legacy of danger for this generation was bequeathed us by Hamilton, not by Jefferson."

In a concluding paragraph our author recognizes that the American people took Jefferson into their hearts as they have never taken any other statesman until Lincoln in these latter days. "His influence endured his green old age at Monticello, the favored spot where in the early days when American independence had hardly been thought of he used to sit under the trees and chat and dream over theories of government and power over men and the ways in which it asserted itself." The first term of his Presidency was serene, and as candidate for his second term he simply swept the country. When he died on the 4th of July, 1826, "he had lived long enough to see the fruition of his work, to see the American people in full sympathy with him and to win back the esteem of the great statesman John Adams, from whom he had been so long divided. Could there have been a nobler triumph for this strong and sweet nature?" M. W. H.

The Credibility of Religion.

In a volume of some three hundred pages entitled *Religion as a Credible Doctrine* (Macmillans), Mr. W. H. MALLOCK undertakes to deal with the question how far the theory of life which is associated with the name of religion is a theory to which, under existing conditions of knowledge, a reasonable man can any longer assent. He begins with a definition of religion. For the purpose of the argument set forth in the book before us, he means by religion an assent to the three following propositions: First, that a living God exists who is worthy of our religious emotion, and is able to take account of it; secondly, that the will of man is free, and thirdly, that his life does not cease with the dissolution of his physical organism. The two latter propositions are, he submits, as necessarily constituent parts of the conception of religion as is the first, because, if our actions were all of them predetermined, there would be in them nothing on which a God could justly adjudicate, and if, with the death of the body, we utterly cease to be, it would matter to us very little whether God adjudicated on them or not. Why does the author limit the meaning of the word religion to these three propositions? Because an assent to them is essential to every religion, and because they form the sole points at which religion, as apart from revelation, comes into collision with science. They constitute, in Haeckel's words, "the three buttresses of superstition" which science sets itself to destroy. In so far, then, as religion is to-day a subject of doubt or controversy, these three propositions are practically religion itself.

The first half of the book before us is devoted to an examination, from a scientific viewpoint, of the two doctrines that man is immortal and that his will is free—the doctrines which alone present man to us in the light of a possible party to the moral, personal, direct and abiding relation between the divine and the human which it is the essence of all religion to postulate. For the argument by which Mr. Mallock arrives at his conclusion, we must refer the reader to the book itself, but we will state his conclusion, pointing out that it is based on scientific grounds alone, and that, on non-scientific grounds, the author ultimately arrives at an opposite conclusion. So far as the facts and methods of science are concerned, we cannot, in Mr. Mallock's opinion, resist the conclusion that, "as to his will, man is nothing but a mere machine, who, whatever he does, deserves neither praise nor blame, since, whatever he does, he could not have done otherwise. As to his alleged immortality, we have seen that the more deeply we penetrate into the observable facts on which his life and his mind depend the more clear does it become to us that these facts, all and singly, exhibit his life as a mere fleeting phenomenon, which appears with the body and disappears with it, leaving nothing behind; a kind of life which, even if God existed, could have nothing to hope for in His love and nothing to fear from His displeasure."

The author next considers the religious doctrine of God. Putting the deficiencies of man altogether aside, and, for the sake of argument, supposing him to be capable himself of the religious relation on the one hand, if only there is a God who is capable and is worthy of it on the other, Mr. Mallock inquires whether the facts and methods of science compel, invite, or even allow us to believe that a God of this kind exists. To this inquiry three chapters are allotted. The outcome of the investigation is that the facts and methods of science will not allow us to believe in the existence of a God of the kind postulated in the conception of religion. We quote the author's words: "We have seen that, if we consider the universe apart from the organic life contained in it, it is, according to the admission of thinkers of every school, a system of absolute monism, so far as observation reveals it to us. We have also seen that, in spite of every argument by which religious and metaphysical apologists endeavor to escape from the conclusion, organic life is a system of absolute monism likewise, and that, if in the cosmic process there has been any interference at any time, it was, to quote an expression of Prof. Ward's, an interference that 'took place before the process began, not during it.' We have seen that, consequently, the entire intellectual scheme of religion—the doctrines of immortality, of freedom and of a God who is, in his relation to ourselves, separable from this process—is not only a system which is unsupported by any single scientific fact, but is also a system for which, amongst the facts of science, it is utterly impossible for the intellect to find a place. In other words, that entire conception of existence which alone for the mass of mankind has invested life with value is in absolute opposition to that general system of the universe, the accuracy of which is every day reattested by every fresh addition made to our positive knowledge."

Is it, then, impossible to reconcile these two opposites? It is to this question that the author lastly addresses himself. In his three final chapters he essays to show the reader that there is a very simple method—different from that of the religious apologist or the metaphysical dreamer—by which, without any surrender of science or common sense the desired reconciliation may be accomplished to the satisfaction of reasonable men. The conclusion here reached is that we can give assent to the three propositions contained in the conception of religion by an act of faith precisely similar to the act of faith by which we accept the phenomena and so-called laws of science. It is, in a word, the purpose of the book before us to prove that our grounds for believing in the reality of the moral world are of the same nature as those on which we believe in the reality of the cosmic world. Let us hear Mr. Mallock on this point: "Our belief in the reality of the cosmic world, from the stars to the chairs we sit on, is so universal and instinctive that it never occurs to most people to ask themselves how they came by it; or else, if the question is suggested to them, they will answer that they derive the belief from reason and the evidence of their senses, just as they derive their belief in any other truth of science. It requires, however, only a slight effort of thought to understand that the real existence of anything outside ourselves is not, in any sense, a truth of science at all. Science does not give it to the world of ordinary men. The world of ordinary men gives it to science, and ordinary men themselves get it neither from sense nor reason. The senses merely give men certain internal ideas. The belief in the external world is an inference as to the external causes of these internal ideas, and reason, instead of supporting this inference that the causes must be external objects, entirely fails, as all thinkers now admit, to assure us of the existence of anything outside our individual selves. It is perfectly true, as Prof. Clifford has shown, that, if once we assent to the reality of other living and conscious minds, reason then can impose on us a belief in the world of matter which forms the common cause of all our similar experiences; but, in taking this primary step of believing that these other minds really exist reason can offer us no help whatever. Reason is a guide if we follow it faithfully, not to belief, but to scepticism. But, in urging this fact, are we urging the sceptic's conclusion that the reality of the external world is a fact of which we are practically doubtful? On the contrary, instead of declaring the existence of the external world to be doubtful, we are merely declaring that reason is not our sole source of certainty."

The author points out that no one has shown this to be the case with more lucidity and force than Hume, who is popularly looked upon as a leader of modern skepticism. It is true that Hume has shown that skepticism is the outcome of philosophy. The moral, however, which he himself drew from this fact was not that we should become practical skeptics, but that no one except a madman will attempt to base his life on the data of philosophical reason. "My intention," says Hume, "in displaying so carefully the [skeptical] argument, is only to make the reader sensible of the truth of my hypothesis that belief [in the objective world] is more properly an act of the sensitive than of the cognitive part of our nature. Nature has not left this act to man's choice, and has doubtless esteemed it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings." Mr. Mallock further reminds us that Reid, who, imperfectly acquainted with Hume's personal position, endeavored to refute his skepticism with a philosophy of common sense, was driven himself to fall back on the precise argument of his antagonist, and to declare that our certainty of the existence of the external world was due, not to reason, but to what he called "an original instinct." So, too, in our own day, Mr. Herbert Spencer has maintained that this same certainty, the force of which is quite irresistible, is not derived from any ordinary process of reasoning; while Prof. Huxley frankly declared that our certainty of the existence of the external world originates in an act of faith.

Here, then, in this broad fact, our author finds the reasonable basis of religion. "Just as faith or instinct having given us the cosmic world as a reality, science discovers the principles which underlie its phenomena, so, faith or instinct having given us the moral world as a reality, analytical reason and a study of the human character perform with regard to the moral world an office of the same kind. They discover the principles involved, by direct assent or implication, in the judgments, activities, actions and sentiments of which human life, in its higher manifestations is composed; and amongst these principles they find that the most fundamental are the three elementary doctrines which constitute the religion of theism—the doctrines that men are free and are not mere cosmic automata; that they have some life which outlasts the dissolution of physical organism; and that between their lives and the supreme cause of the universe a personal relationship subsists in virtue of which human affairs are invested with a meaning and importance imperceptible to the eye of ordinary observation. It is true that these doctrines have not been held consciously by all of the higher races during the past history of the world; but these races have been animated at all events by unconscious or sub-conscious assumptions of which these three doctrines are the only logical expression; and with every advance which is made in positive knowledge, and with every enlargement of our conception of things which results from it, any substitute for these doctrines becomes more and more impossible."

Since then each of the two worlds—the cosmic world and the moral—is apprehended and accepted as a reality by a similar act of faith—by a sensitive, by an instinctive, and not by any cognitive process; and since each of the two worlds, when we thus accept it, is found to imply propositions which are for the human intellect absolutely irreconcilable and contradictory, we are "performing no act of a new, unique, rash and unreasonable kind in accepting the doctrines of religion as the principles of the moral world, together with the laws of science which are the principles of the cosmic world; though it is absolutely impossible for us, by any mental ingenuity to conceive how the latter are empirically susceptible of any union or coöperation with the former. In believing that God, freedom and the immortal soul exist in the cosmic world, though that world reveals no trace of them, we are doing no more violence to reason than we are when we assert, as we all do, that this cosmic world is real—that it exists outside ourselves, and that science, within limits, is its true, and the only true, interpreter."

Thus we arrive at Mr. Mallock's ultimate conclusion, which is that, if religion, in the face of modern knowledge, is ever to be reëstablished on a firm, intellectual basis, this result must be brought about by a recognition of the intellectual truths that the existence of nothing in its totality can ever be grasped by the human intellect; that the totality of things in general, and the totality of each thing in particular, as a tree of such enormous girth that our arms are too short to clasp it, and instead of meeting around it, extend themselves in opposite directions. Our author holds that, if we learn to recognize the scope and the significance of this profound truth, we shall at once become conscious of a sense of intellectual emancipation; and, in dealing with the facts of the cosmic and the moral worlds, we shall no longer feel ourselves bound either to sacrifice the one to the other, or to sacrifice our own honesty in fantastic and degrading attempts to effect in terms of the intellect a reconciliation between the two. Of such attempts three kinds have been reviewed in the book before us. They are thus described in the final chapter: "First, there is that of the ordinary religious apologist, who, with desperate disingenuousness or ignorance, endeavors to vindicate the reality of God and of moral freedom by reading into the facts of science a meaning which they will not bear. Secondly, there is that of our quasi-scientific idealists, who, instead of tampering with the facts of science in detail, endeavor to represent them as facts of an abstract and non-real world, and thus to absorb the cosmic world in the moral. Lastly, there is that of the modern scientific monists, who endeavor to absorb the moral world in the cosmic, and, whilst rejecting the doctrine of religion, to supply us with a moral equivalent. And all these attempts are, as we have seen, failures. They are more than failures. They are ridiculous and ignominious failures; and, if anything, in the eyes of ordinary reasonable men, could make the doctrines and the significance of theistic religion contemptible, it would be the arguments employed by our modern apologists to defend them." Mr. Mallock hastens to add that the fault does not lie with the character of the apologists personally. "It lies with the character of the impossible task which they have undertaken. The cosmic world with its uniformity, and the moral world with its freedom, can no more be held together by the intellect, in such a manner as to form an intelligible whole, than two masses of wall which are falling in opposite directions can be held together with a postage stamp."

How, then, would Mr. Mallock accomplish the synthesis of the free and the necessary?—of the freedom essential to the moral world and the necessity characteristic of the cosmic world? His answer is that a synthesis cannot be accomplished at all in any way which the logical reason or cognitive faculty can comprehend. "But," he says, "what philosophers cannot do to the satisfaction of the intellect, the mass of mankind does in obedience to the practical reason—to 'an original instinct,' as Reid calls it, or to 'a primary instinct or prepossession,' as Hume calls it. It unites the free and the necessary in a synthesis, the practical truth of which it attests from generation to generation, by its love, by its blood, by its tears, by its joys, by its sorrows and by its prayers. It will never be argued out of creating this moral world for itself, any more than it will be argued out of believing in the reality of the world of matter; and, in order that it may fearlessly interpret the moral world to itself in terms of that religion which alone will give it meaning and coherence, the mass of mankind merely requires to be assured that it is doing to reason and common sense no greater violence when it believes in God, freedom and immortality, than it is when it believes in the existence of ponderable matter and of ether; and that no greater contradiction in thought is involved in a deliberate belief in the coexistence of the two incompatible worlds—the cosmic world and the moral—than is involved in a belief in the existence of either of these worlds separately."

This, in a word, is the lesson of this book, a lesson which, when we come to think of it, was propounded more than forty years ago by Dr. H. L. Mansel in his Bampton Lectures, the lesson, namely, that the fact of our adopting a creed which involves an assent to contradictories is not a sign that our creed is useless or absurd, but that the ultimate nature of things is, for our minds, inscrutable.